WINTER ★ SOLDIER

A PUBLICATION OF VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR / WINTER SOLDIER ORGANIZATION

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 3 ★★★

EDITORIAL

In commemorating International Women's Day, it is fitting that we reaffirm our determination to struggle against the systematic exploitation and oppression women undergo in this country. We must always remember that the cause of this oppression is a system - imperialism. The roots of sexism are in this system: it is the enemy we must combat, not some inherently perverse nature of men.

In the context of today's economic crisis, the oppression of women in the US stands out in ever sharper relief. Our economic system needs to keep wages as low as possible. This is accomplished, in part, through chronically high unemployment which maintains a large pool of cheap reserve labor. Women and 3rd World people have historically formed this group in the US. In any economic pinch, they are the first ones to get hit. Today, already holding the poorest paying jobs, unable to get equal pay for equal work, women are the ones who must hold the front lines against skyrocketing food prices and fuel costs. With the hundreds of thousands of job layoffs recently, much of the gains women have made towards equal employment in past years have been eroded in a few months. Those remaining employed find that their frozen wages can't begin to keep pace with the inflationary price spiral.

It is becomning clear to most Americans that we are in for a rough time in this country. We have increasingly less choice about combating the mounting problems we face; the struggle for major change in our society is becomning a necessity. To do this we will need to be as united as possible. The divisions placed between the people are clearly our enemy in this.

It has been said that women hold up half the sky. Certainly without women both participating in and leading the struggle for change in the US we will never get anywhere.
only look to the incredibly crucial role women played in the struggle for liberating Vietnam to see the truth of this. We must understand that in the US, the rising of the women will be the rising of us all.

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NEWS BRIEFS

★★★★★★★

LEAVENWORTH PENITENTIARY

On February 7, 1974, a Federal Grand Jury sitting in Kansas City, Ka, handed down major indictments in connection with the July 31, 1973, inmate rebellion at the U. S. Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas. Though the content of the indictments has not been made official, we have learned that Odell Bennett, Jesse Lee Evans, Alf Hill and Alfred Jasper have been charged with murder, assault and kidnapping. William Hurst, Jesse Lopez and Arman do Miramon were charged with assault and kidnapping. All are VVAW/WSO members. Bennett, Hill and Jasper have also been indicted for post-July 31 incidents. On Feb. 13th, after having been severely beaten, these men were brought to court for discussion of the indictments; one man required 29 stitches in his head. Seventy inmates have been placed in isolation cells following a protest of the beatings.

POLICE ATTACK N. CALIF. VVAW/WSO COORDINATOR

On Feb. 6th, Bob Hood, N. Calif. Coordinator, stopped his truck to act as a witness for a friend who was being harassed by police. The police then pointed a .38 caliber pistol at him and order ed him to put his hands up. When he complied, he was knocked to the ground and beaten. Bob was taken to City Jail and booked for "assault with a deadly weapon against a police officer," after police found a pocket knife on him.

USS LITTLE ROCK

Ten black sailors announced at a news conference on February 13th, that they were the victims of racial discrimination. They made the announcement at a hotel room in Naples, Italy, along with their lawyer, Robert S. Rivkin from the Lawyers Military Defense Committee.

The announcement came as a result of a previously unpublicized fight which took place on the cruiser USS Little Rock on Nov. 8, 1973, while on patrol in the Meditarranean during the Middle East crisis. The fight broke out after a white seaman attacked a black sailor with a wrench. The black sailors said the incident followed months of racial tension and the institutionalized racism of the ship's officers. One white seaman involved got 45 days in the brig; the other was acquitted. The black sailors are asking that their case be removed from the ship's command. They face a maximum of 6 months' confinement and a Bad Conduct Discharge.

★★★★★★

FARAH STRIKERS WIN VICTORY

In an unusually broad and harshly worded statement, a National Labor Relations Board judge ruled recently that Farah Manufacturing Co. must allow the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America to organize in Farah plants. Farah will appeal the ruling.

The strikers, mostly Mexican-American women, went on strike in May, 1972, for job security and union recognition in an effort to end poor working conditions and low pay. A boycott of Farah pants has been on for over a year. The boycott and strike have forced a shutdown of 4 plants and the loss of millions of dollars to Farah.

★★★★★★

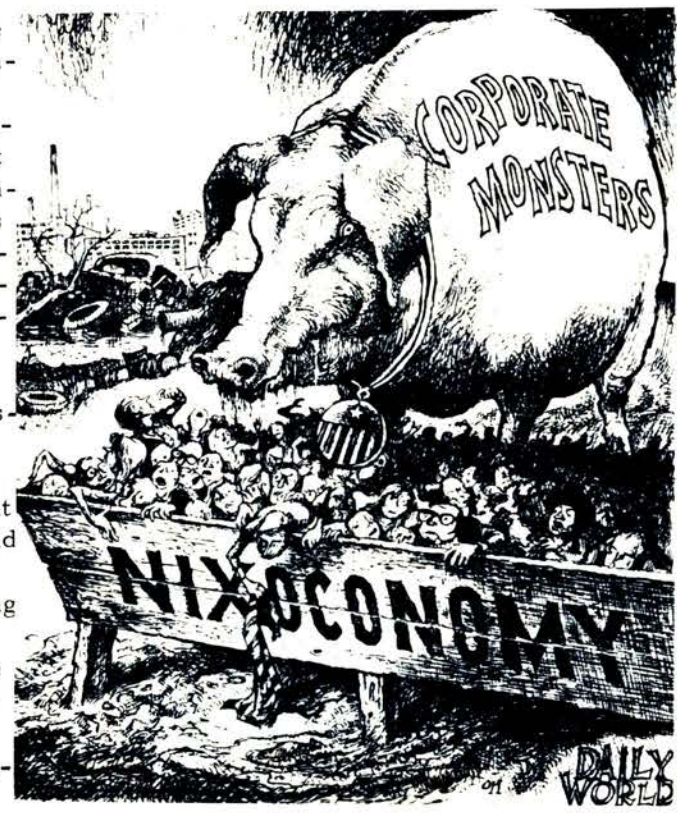
LAWTON/GARDNER TRIAL

Chief Counsel for Gary Lawton in his third trial will be Mr. Franklin S. Glenn of San Jose, California; Assistant Counsel will be Mr. William Kunstler from the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York City. Pre-trial motions have been filed by the attorneys in an effort to call a halt to the harassment of Lawton and Gardner. No trial date has been set for this unprecedented third trial for the murder of two Riverside, California, policemen. Complete background available from VVAW/WSO National Office.

Which Comes First In America?

PROFITS vs PEOPLE

Richard Nixon, in his State of the Union address, tried to scare away America's economic crisis by saying: "There will be no recession in the United States of America." This statement comes as a shock to the millions of Americans facing a deluge of rising prices and shrinking buying power. Even Nixon's aides are having a hard time making reality fit the distortions of Nixonomics.



Ground beef is $1.39 a pound, gasoline is over 50¢ a gallon and a loaf of bread may cost as much as a dollar in the spring. Five million people are out of work and economists say that it could be as high as 7-8 million by the end of the year. The inflation rate is hovering at 8% while wages are being held to a possible 5.5% increase. However, the corporations in agriculture and energy are showing enormous profits while wage earners are drowning in the "non-existent" recession.

The answer to this contradiction is summed up in one word: exports. According to United Nation statistics, a third of the wheat bought on the world market comes from the United States and Canada. During the 1960's, the US exported over 40% of its cotton, rice and major grain crops. Japan now eats 29% of all U.S. meat exports and in 1973, the U.S. tripled its total meat exports. Not only does agribusiness profit from exports, the energy industry has reported that most of its phenomenal profits in the last quarter of 1973 came from foreign oil sales and production.

To understand the importance of exporting U.S. production, one need only look at the related industries. As the corporations send more to foreign markets, the supply available to American consumers shrinks accordingly. When wheat is sold overseas, the cost per bushel domestically rises. This affects the meat industry since feed comes from grain. Now take the high cost of meat and add it to the rising cost of transporting that meat and you have a $1.39 for hamburger. That's a pretty simplified picture, so let's look at the grain industry in more detail.

Testifying before the House Committee on Ways and Means, Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz said: "Exports are responsible for about one-fifth to one-quarter of net farm income... This year we are exporting the produce of more than 80 million acres, equivalent to nearly 30% of harvested cropland." At the same time, the government was paying corporations to withold 60 million acres of land from production. Instead of curbing exports to increase the supply at home, Nixon allowed the grain industry (read: corporations like Continental - a subsidiary of ITT, Tenneco, General Foods, Greyhound and Safeway) to make a killing with the Soviet wheat deal. While witholding information from the public about a major wheat sale to the Soviet Union, he let the giant grain dealers in on the secret, allowing them to buy up wheat supplies cheaply. Then, when the price of wheat on the world market had jumped several dollars, the exporters unloaded the wheat to the Russians, thus making a huge profit (part of which included 150 million dollars in government subsidies which are funded by taxpayers money).

All this exporting causes a shortage on the domestic market and forces prices up. Cattle feed costs more, thus causing a rise in the prices of wholesale beef. This causes a ripple in the whole meat industry as everyone raises their price, until it reaches the consumer (who can't raise the money to pay for it). No one who steps inside a supermarket can miss this. In August, 1972, a dozen eggs cost 31¢ in Chicago. A year later that same dozen eggs cost 80¢. In June, 1973, a pound of chicken cost 45¢ in New York City. Just two months later, in August, that same pound of chicken cost 74¢.

The fuel industry works the same way with an even more drastic effect. In earlier issues of Winter Soldier, we explained that the fuel "crisis" was a planned shortage, but it is also important to realize that the super profits the oil companies are reporting come from the inflated prices of oil on the world market. Exxon, one of the biggest oil producers, had an overall profit increase of 50% for 1973. Seventy-five percent of that profit was made overseas. Everyone knows the effect that the fuel shortage has had in terms of jobs and the very way Americans must now live. To further illustrate the trouble the economy is in, the GNP (Gross National Product) showed only 1% increase. That means that the supply of goods on the U.S. market is dropping while the prices for those goods are rising.

Besides the stagnation in U.S. production at home, many companies are moving their factories to other countries where labor is cheap and unorganized. Already, whole factories have been moved to Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Only one new oil refinery has been opened in the U.S. in the last two years while several refineries have been constructed overseas. These movements overseas play a key part in domestic inflation. Inflation, put simply, means that the dollar has less value for purchasing goods while the supply of goods decreases.

This is the essence of imperialism. Nixon and his policies are only protecting this basic tenet of the American economy -- the scramble to make profits. If Exxon and ITT can make more money by selling and producing in foreign markets then that's what they will do. They will also insure their ability to do this by controlling the policies of the federal government to the extent of buying a president, pouring millions into campaign contributions, lobbying, and asking for military protection of their foreign holdings. Inflation does not hurt ITT. We oppose imperialism because it hurts us -- the poor, wage earners and small businesspeople alike. To demand an end to imperialism means to demand an end to joblessness, an end to high prices, an end to government by the dollar, and an end to wars like Vietnam. To kick Nixon out of office is to show that we are opposed to these practices and will not tolerate loss of lives or food for the rise of profits.

The Continuing War

INDOCHINA

"Now that we're not actually dropping bombs, we must maintain our capability to resume such action if we have to." This was said by Gen. Jon Vogt, U. S. Air Force Commander.

This and other government statements make the point for us that the U. S. government is prepared, willing and ready to resume the air war in Indochina at any time. It is therefore necessary for the movement to continue to press for a complete end to aid for Thieu and Lon Nol, implementation of the Paris Agreement, and recognition of the legitimate governments in Indochina.

VIETNAM

Thieu and his Saigon associates have been continuing their violations of the Paris Peace Accords. There has been no move by Saigon toward the formation of a National Council for National Reconciliation and Concord, which, according to the treaty, was to include communist and non-communist opponents and was to organize national elections. Thieu has gone so far as to cancel all elections and then self-righteously declare that "there will be no peace."

At the same time, Thieu has been attacking the PRG controlled areas. Up to 100 air sorties a day have been launched by Saigon (TIME Magazine). With this, Thieu has also launched more than 100,000 "pacification" and police operations in the areas he controls. Not only does he detain and torture political prisoners, but for some time now Saigon prison guards have been dropping corpses of political prisoners into the rivers, where numerous naked, headless, armless and legless bodies can be seen floating everyday. Strict ordert have been given that under no circumstances can these bodies be fished out and buried.

The U. S. Congress and President have continued to back these practices by voting $1.1 billion in military aid to Thieu, and they have now moved to increase it by an additional $1 billion worth of war materials.

FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS

IMPLEMENT THE TREATY

LAOS

Implementation of the February, 1973, Laos Peace Agreement is still being delayed by the U. S. and its allies in Vientiane. The agreement called for complete withdrawal of foreign military (specifically naming the United States). Yet, the U. S. has refused to withdraw its Thai mercenaries, trained and paid for by the C. I. A.

In addition, Vientiane troops (trained, financed and "advised" by the U. S. government) have been attacking areas under the control of the Lao Patriotic Front. They have refused to allow civilians to return to their homes and villages (called for by the agreement) if these areas were controlled by the Patriotic Front.

The conduct of the Pathet Lao on the other hand, has been considerably different. As shown by a report in the Washington Post: "They (Pathet Lao) are models of deportment. They have opened up a free medical dispensary complete with an accupuncturist which has very much impressed the local population. Medecine on the government side is not free nor plentiful. Interviews indicate that the Pathet Lao enjoy sympathy among the population of Luang Prabang who are sick of corrupt government and military officials."

IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT

LAOS FOR THE LAOTIANS

CAMBODIA

The situation for the Phnom Penh government is deteriorating hourly. The liberation forces have been shelling Phnom Penh with captured U. S. 105 Howitozars. At the same time, they have blockaded the Mekong River and cut the two major roads into the city, thus isolating Phnom Penh and bringing it to economic collapse.

Lon Nol troops continue to desert en masse. A whole unit stationed at Kompong Tram refused to fight and crossed over to the side of the National United Front, taking all their weapons with them. Even though Lon Nol continues to tell his troops that they are fighting "North Vietnamese and Viet Cong," the troops at the front line know from first-hand experience that this is nonsense: "The voices that call from across the river are Khmer voices." (New York Times).

The U. S. continues to be the only power holding the Lon Nol government together. Internally, it is our tax dollars that finance all aspects of this corrupt group. Internally, it is the U. S. that keeps the pressure on our "allies" for continued recognition of Lon Nol over Sihanouk. It is therefore our duty to force an end to the U. S. government support of Lon Nol and push for the recognition of the legitimate government of the Cambodian people, GRUNC, headed by Prince Sihanouk.

END AID TO LON NOL

RECOGNIZE GRUNC

UNITY-STRUGGLE-VICTORY

DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARDS

Photo: Winter Soldier

One of VVAW/WSO's Discharge Upgrading Projects

The military's system of discharges is something most people, including GIs and veterans, poorly understand. A more unjust, racist institution would be hard to find. There are 5 types of discharges issued by the military: honorable, general (GD), undesirable (UD), bad conduct (BCD), and dishonorable (DD). Only two of these, BCDs and DDs, are given as a result of a court-martial. The rest are given by administrative procedure. Of the 560,000 Vietnam-era veterans with less-than-honorable discharges, (LTHD), all but 33,000 were given administratively where the individual receiving the discharge was not able to cross-examine witnesses, challenge affadavits or appeal decisions in military courts. Whether punitive or administrative, all LTHDs play havoc with people's lives. Badly discharged vets are rarely eligible for the GI Bill or VA benefits and have a miserable time finding decent jobs. Rep. Seiberling of Ohio conducted a survey that found over half of all companies polled admitted discrimination in job hiring against badly discharged vets. The problem is growing. Last year alone, the Army issued over 50,000 LTHDs or 16.4% of all discharges in 1973!

The only legal means of changing a LTHD is to apply to the Discharge Review Board, (DRB), or the Board for Correction of Military Records, (BCMR). Each branch of service has its own DRB and BCMR in Washington, DC. The DRB usually consists of 5 active duty officers, (one female if the applicant is a woman). The DRB can only change a discharge or issue a new one. It cannot review a discharge stemming from a General Court-martial. These cases must go to the BCMR. Composed of at least 3 civilians, the BCMR can review cases denied by the DRB. Unlike the DRB, the BCMR is not limited to discharge upgrading, but can also grant back pay and allowances. Application to these boards can be made in a number of ways: by affadavits; in person, with or without counsel; by counsel alone; or by a combination of all. The vet must pay for all costs involved in this: transportation of himself, his counsel or witnesses. If the DRB and/or the BCMR denies an appeal, the individual's only alternative is to file suit in Federal District Court in Washington - a luxury few can afford.

There are a number of categories of appeals that the DRB or BCMR may act favorably on, including: LTHDs caused by AWOL if problems at home were involved; having a clean record up to receiving a LTHD; having a clean record since receiving one; getting into trouble after combat duty; receiving a LTHD for drug abuse, (all veterans receiving bad discharges because of drugs prior to Aug. '71 may have them upgraded - about 50% actually are); if the offense was committed off-base, off-duty, out of uniform, against a civilian. Getting the boards to approve the case on these grounds is not at all assured.

Due to the expenses involved, lack of knowledge about the review process, lack of qualified counselling services, etc., very few badly discharged vets have actually applied to the boards for upgrading. The review system clearly discriminates against 3rd World and working class people. From 1967-73 only 36,379 appeals were heard. Of these, only 8,451 were upgraded. This is but a small fraction of the 386,637 vets receiving LTHDs during the same period. (The army, with a 13% approval rate on appeals, presently takes from 1 1/2 to 2 years to hear a case!) As over 160,000 vets have received LTHDs since 1972 alone, it appears that the number of people affected by bad discharges is growing at an alarming rate.

The problem facing these veterans is part of the disaster caused the American people by the war in Indochina. A war that has caused to date over 6 million Indochinese casualties and left the US with over 55,000 dead and 300,000 casualties. Bad discharges resulted from the resistance to the war and the racism and oppression of the military, (in 1972, the Dept. of Defense 'noted' that black GIs were twice as likely to receive LTHDs than white GIs). Because the war was wrong, resistance was right. Just as we are now raising a demand for amnesty for those who resisted the war by going into exile, underground or prison, so we are raising the same demand for GIs who resisted the war and the military. These are the 560,000 Vietnam-era vets who received LTHDs.

What should we be doing to obtain this? VVAW/WSO is setting up discharge upgrading projects around the country to counsel badly discharged vets, and prepare and file appeals. But this is only part of the way in which amnesty for all these veterans will be won. The counselling of badly discharged vets and filing of appeals in itself will not win amnesty. What we are demanding is a single-type discharge. This means that when someone leaves the military, all he or she would receive would be a certificate of separation; no categories of discharge at all would be given. We demand that this single-type discharge be given retroactively to all vets.

By fighting for the single-type discharge as an integral part of the amnesty campaign and by getting as many badly discharged vets as possible to file for upgrading with the review boards, there is an awful lot of pressure that can be concentrated on the system. By joining together we will be able to win this demand. A single-type discharge demand is the only thing that makes sense.

For more information regarding discharge upgrading contact your nearest VVAW/WSO regional office.

A SINGLE TYPE DISCHARGE FOR ALL VETERANS!!

G.I.s CONTINUE

G.I. Resists Riot Duty

(Fort Kobbe, Canal Zone) Pfc. Stanley Kuzminski is awaiting court-martial at Ft. Kobbe in the Canal Zone for disobeying a direct order. It all started in Oct., 1973, when he applied for discharge as a conscientious objector and his claim got tangled up in red tape.

In his own words: "My company and another company were scheduled to give a demonstration on riot control for the Undersecretary of the Army. (Ed. note: This was prior to Kissinger's visit to the Canal Zone to negotiate a treaty that was supposed to return the Canal Zone to the Panamanian people. The Army's riot training was intended as a precaution against a recurrence of what happened 10 years ago, when 21 protesting students were killed by American soldiers). "My company plays the part of a violent mob that is dispersed by riot troops. There is sniper fire, agitators, casualties, the whole bit... On the 17th of January the battalion was notified that the demonstration would be held the 22nd. On the 18th, I was ordered to go to the rehearsal with my company."

"Before the first rehearsal, my platoon leader approached me and told me I was going to participate. I told him I couldn't because it was against my beliefs and a violation of my rights. He said it was not against my beliefs and rights because I would not be carrying a gun. I then argued that this was a part of riot training, which is combat-oriented training...I was given a direct order to participate. I didn't actually participate...I just walked along behind the crowd with my hands in my pockets. When they were dispersed and were supposed to run, I walked...On Monday the 21st, I was again ordered to go to the riot and participate. I went to the riot, but I refused to participate."

Kuzminski was then ordered a summary court-martial, which he refused on the 31st, and is now waiting on the Army's next move. At this point, the Army may decide to drop charges. If they don't, he can expect a special court-martial. His CO claim is still hanging somewhere in the bureaucracy, and he is facing 6 months' confinement and a Bad Conduct Discharge.

Stanley has no access to any civilian attorney in the Canal Zone, though an ACLU lawyer in New York has agreed to work with him and his JAG lawyer by long-distance phone and mail. He needs support from the civilian community. For further information, contact: CCCO, 407 S. Dearborn, Chicago Illinois, 60605.

SGT. FIGHTS HAIR REG.

Dan Pruitt being carried on shoulders of supporters after sentencing

(Alconbury AFB, Hunts, England) Air Force Sgt. Dan Pruitt was convicted by a court-martial on January 28 of eight counts of refusing to cut his hair. Pruitt, who considered hair length and personal apperance to be the concern only of the individual GI, was sentenced to four months' imprisonment, a bust in rank, and a Bad Conduct Discharge.

Supporters of Dan Pruitt wanted to attend his trial, but the judge, Major Wright, allowed only 18 spectators and newsmen into the tiny courtroom and refused to move into a larger room. Although many airmen were put on extra duty to stifle support for Dan, stickers reading "Fight the Hair Reg: Support Dan!" were visible all over the base. Civilian members of London VVAW/WSO contacted the media and circulated petitions, collecting more than 800 signatures. Dan appeared on TV before his trial and gained a lot of supporters throughout England.

During the trial itself, one airman was busted for "distributing unauthorized literature" because he was handing information sheets to newsmen. Another was charged with "improper dress" because he had a "Support Dan" sticker attached to his uniform.

Dan's lawyer, former Air Force resister Tom Culver, argued that the hair regulations were unconstitutional and abridged Dan's rights of self-expression. He further pointed out that WAFs were working in Dan's career field, and that since there was no job discrimination between men and women in that field, there should be no rules for personal appearance that only applied to one sex.

Wright ruled that equal employment was not a general "unisex rule," and that the Air Force's hair regulations were legal. He then made a cute comment suggesting that Pruitt might not know "whether he was a man or a woman." This flippant, sexist remark will be one of the bases on which Pruitt's lawyers will ask for a reversal of the conviction on appeal.

Dan's case has greatly increased interest among GIs in England in the fight for GI rights. Several of them have joined VVAW/WSO, which has many members who are veterans and draft resisters, as well as U.S. and British civilians; this linking up of GIs, vets, and exiles can only strengthen the growing amnesty movement and promote discussion of how GI Rights and universal, unconditional amnesty are part of one and the same demand: Freedom for all of our brothers and sisters!

CONTACT: Union of American Exiles in Britain (VVAW/WSO), 2 Turquand Street, London S.E. 17, England.

News on these pages was compiled by NOSCAM, the VVAW/WSO National Office GI Project. This office coordinates active-duty chapters, new VVAW/WSO members and chapters, GI Movement news, and all other GI Movement activities. Contact one of the NOSCAM offices for more information:

NOSCAM-Dayton, PO Box 1625, Dayton, Ohio 45401 (513) 274-3171

NOSCAM-Chicago, 2743 N. Wilton, Chicago, Ill. 60614 (312) 929-1958 (evenings only)

TO STRUGGLE!

A.F. RACISM EXPOSED

(Ent AFB, Colorado) A black airman, a VVAW/WSO member, is facing serious charges at Ent AFB as a result of rampant racism among the security police at the base. A1C Charles Beaman will be court-martialed on March 18 on charges of assault on a policeman, failure to obey a direct order, threatening words, and disrespect to a superior officer.

The charges stem from an incident that took place on December 11, 1973. On that day a female member of the Security Police (SPs) stated that a black GI had made an obscene gesture toward her. A black airman was arrested; Beaman and a number of other black GIs were present and observed the arrest. Half an hour later, Beaman was driving his car on the base when SPs stopped him and forcibly dragged him from his car after he refused to get out. He had been given no reason for why he was being stopped, and thus he was within his rights to refuse to get out of the car. After being yanked out, he was searched, ordered to park his car, and told he was being taken to the Ent security complex. He refused to go along with the "orders," and when he was grabbed by an SP, he struck back in self-defense. The next thing he knew, he was lying on the ground, being stomped by the SPs. He was then held for two hours, during which time he was stomped on again when he refused to hand over his identification. After he was released, he went to the clinic, where he couldn't get treatment; he reported this to the clinic's commanding officer, who was totally uncooperative and got into an argument with Beaman. This led to the "disrespect" charge against Beaman.

This incident is only the latest in a series of events involving white SPs at Ent and their harassment of Beaman and other black GIs. Beaman and some friends were stopped for a traffic ticket by some SPs in July, and were subjected to verbal racial epithets before being confronted with the SPs' drawn guns. Beaman complained, but no action was ever taken against the SPs.

The pattern of harassment of black airmen at Ent has its roots in the nature of the base and its security force. All of the SPs involved in these incidents have been white, since most of the SPs at Ent are white. Also, the Ent brass are particularly afraid of any militant actions by GIs who want their rights respected. Ent is a top-security, hush-hush base where a lot of classified work takes place. The authorities there want to make sure that blacks on the base "know their place."

CONTACT: Charles Beaman Defense Committee (VVAW/WSO), Box 6133, Colorado Springs, Colo. 80934 (303) 632-6825.

TRIAL SET FOR MARCH

SMITH HASSLED IN PRISON

(Fort Leavenworth, Kansas) The Army has decided to court-martial Melvin Smith for the shooting of a first sergeant in Quang Tri, Vietnam, in 1971. Smith was suffering from a grave head injury and deep emotional stress when he randomly fired a weapon in a mess hall, wounding three men, one fatally. Despite overwhelming psychiatric testimony that he was insane at the time, he was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison. He won a reversal on a technicality last September, and has been informed that he will face a second general court-martial on March 11 or 13. It will be held at Leavenworth.

Meanwhile, the prison brass has been going to great lengths to try to suppress information about, and support for, Melvin's case. As publicity around it began to grow, the prison authorities began tampering with mail into and out of the prison. When a recent letter from Melvin to VVAW/WSO was printed in the VVAW/WSO GI NEWS, a copy of the paper was stolen by the prison brass from the prisoner for whom it was intended. The Director of Custody then confronted Melvin with it and wrote Smith up for a "Disciplinary Hearing." It probably means that he will be sent to isolation; as it is, he has been confined to his quarters and is not free to visit with his brothers. The Director also informed Melvin that all of his mail--in and out--was being read and Xeroxed before it went on its way. The authorities have suggested to Melvin that he had better shut up or "things will get worse for him."

In another letter, Melvin answers the brass: "Matters can't possibly get any worse for me than they have over the years I have been part of a corrupt system known as the U.S. armed forces!....If public recognition and support are so ineffective, the so-called omnipotent administrator wouldn't mind my exposing lies and speaking the truth for what it's actually worth... There is much power in the beautiful kind of eloquence known as protest!"

Melvin Smith goes to trial in less than a month. He needs support and help, both in terms of his trial and in terms of his day-to-day struggle at Leavenworth. He has been singled out by prison authorities because they consider him to be the "ringleader" of black protest at the prison.

Petitions are available from NOSCAM-Chicago; they will be sent out upon request. Donations, which are desperately needed, may be sent to the Melvin Smith Defense Fund, c/o Independence Bank of Chicago, 7936 S. Cottage Grove, Chicago, Ill. 60619. Melvin also needs publicity in any paper that can be interested; any help that can be given is greatly appreciated. In terms of his being harassed at Leavenworth, it would be extremely helpful if supporters would write letters of protest to the Commanding Officer, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 66027, asking that all harassment and mail tampering stop, and that Melvin Smith be given a fair and just trial.

(The full text of Melvin Smith's most recent letter will be printed in the next VVAW/WSO GI NEWS. He has asked that it be published, despite the fact that he has been threatened.)

"THE RISING OF THE WOMEN MEA

INTERNATIONAL

March 8th is recognized around the world as International Women's Day. This widely celebrated holiday was set aside to honor women involved in struggle and working women everywhere. On the occassion of International Women's Day, we should take note of the history of this holiday, as well as the history of women's struggles in the US.

International Women's Day was originated in honor of two all-women strikes which took place in New York City. On March 8, 1857, garment workers went on strike, marched and picketed for better working conditions, equal rights for women, and a 10-hour work day. This strike was brutally broken by New York police. Years later, on March 9, 1908, women in New York's needle trades marched in honor of the 1857 strike, demanding an end to sweatshops and child labor, and the right to vote. This march was joined by women from other factories, women living in slum tenements, and the wealthier women fighting for women's suffrage. These women came together in this first Women's Day event to raise their voices for better working and living conditions. Again, police broke the ranks of women with force and violence. Two years later, in 1910, March 8th was proclaimed as International Women's Day for the purpose of commemorating the two U. S. demonstrations and to honor working women throughout the world.

Women's involvement in labor struggles began long before the 1908 Women's Day celebration. As industrialization began and flourished in the North in the early 1800's, poor women were forced into the life of the factories. Women were seen as a source of cheap labor for the industrialists and women were needed to run the power looms and other factory machines. The exploitation of women as a cheap labor force was realized and first spoken against by women strikers in 1824. During this year, 102 women cotton workers in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, walked off their jobs with their male co-workers. This strike marked the beginning of women's involvement in U. S. labor struggles and set the stage for future organizing efforts. In 1824, the example for the later suffrage movement was established as women proved that they were not passive and weak beings. It took an individual of strength to work a 12-14 hour day in unsafe and inhuman factory conditions, while earning as little as $1.25 a week (one-fourth the wage generally earned by men for a comparable job).

The right to form a trade union became one of the major demands of perhaps the most famous early women's strikes. In 1834, in the Lowell, Massachusetts textile mills, owners declared a 25% wage cut. This declaration was met with over 1000 women marching out of the mills and into the streets where demonstrations were conducted until the strike was broken. Though the strike was unsuccessful, women continued organizing and two years later, another massive walk-out was conducted as 2500 workers at Lowell formed the Factory Girls' Association. This group was smashed by the industrialists shortly after its formation, but was rebuilt in 1844 under the name of the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association. Similar Associations began appearing in other towns and such groups were instrumental in winning the 10-hour work day and are credited with the initiation of the earliest reforms of the textile industry working conditions. The courage displayed by these women not only succeeded in defeating their bosses rule, but also gained them recognition by fellow male workers. In 1846, three women were accepted to join five male co-workers on the New England Labor Reform League board of directors. This was the first time that women took an active leadership role alongside men in the task of unionizing the industrial North.

While women workers in the North were fighting their wage-slavery, black women were integrally involved in the struggle for their freedom from a more brutal form of slavery -- actual human bondage. Two of the most vocal and effective fighters of Southern slavery were women -- Harriett Tubman and Sojourner Truth. Tubman was a child when the famous Nat Turner slave revolt occured and it was only a few years after the rebellion that she helped the first of over 300 slaves escape to freedom. Tubman was instrumental in making the underground railroad a realit slaves from one friendly farm to the North. She defended he revolver and never lost any o helping. Due to her successe mistook "Moses" (as she was and offered a high price for " ner Truth was also an ex-slav her life working for an end to people. Truth was constantly ing at Abolitionist meetings. freeing the slaves, she also d women's suffrage and played struggle for the right to vote. along with many other black s a glorious role in the fight for which is a vital part of the his this country.

Though women have play in destroying slavery and in w selves from the brutal conditi things did not always go smoo Despite the spirit displayed b strikes, the national labor uni tant to allow women to join the only the cigar markers' and t (out of 32 national unions) had Yet, the majority of organizin continually done by women. this began to change as large Knights of Labor and the A. F. full-time women organizers fo pose of raising the level of co workers. This progressive s zing proved fruitful and in a 1 (1895-1905) working women to strikes.

The idea that women we and carry-out a long, difficult self out in 1909 with the "Upri Thousand." During the winte meeting of women from all the New York City was called. A called for, and the next day be

MEANS THE RISING OF US ALL"

AL WOMEN'S DAY

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day between 20,000-30,000 women walked out of their factories. This was the first general strike by women and it continued through 13 weeks of bitter cold weather, numerous arrests and beatings. The strike was eventually broken but it served as the "proving ground" that labor organizing was not something for men alone.

Since this "Uprising," wome have continued to follow in the same heroic path as did their ancestors. As the struggle for human dignity and true equality goes on, women have and must continue to take leading roles in the tasks ahead of us. There is much to be learned from the history of women; from the courage and dedication exhibited by women who have come before us. Their spirit and willingness to engage in long-term struggle should be an inspiration for the women and men of today as we continue the work which has been left to us.

Not only are there lessons to be learned from the history of women in this country, but we must take a close and careful look at the role women have played in the struggles presently going on around the world. U. S. imperialism is being opposed by liberation struggles of third world countries in all corners of the world. Integral to the liberation of these countries is the unity which exists among the people -- between men and women. In Indochina, in Asia, in Africa, and in Latin America we have seen the men and women working side-by-side -- in the villages, in the fields, and in battle -- for the freedom of their people. The successes of these struggles would be difficult to imagine if women were not involved on an equal basis with men in the day-to-day battles for independence. This unity in work and in purpose is the lesson that we in the U. S. must learn from.

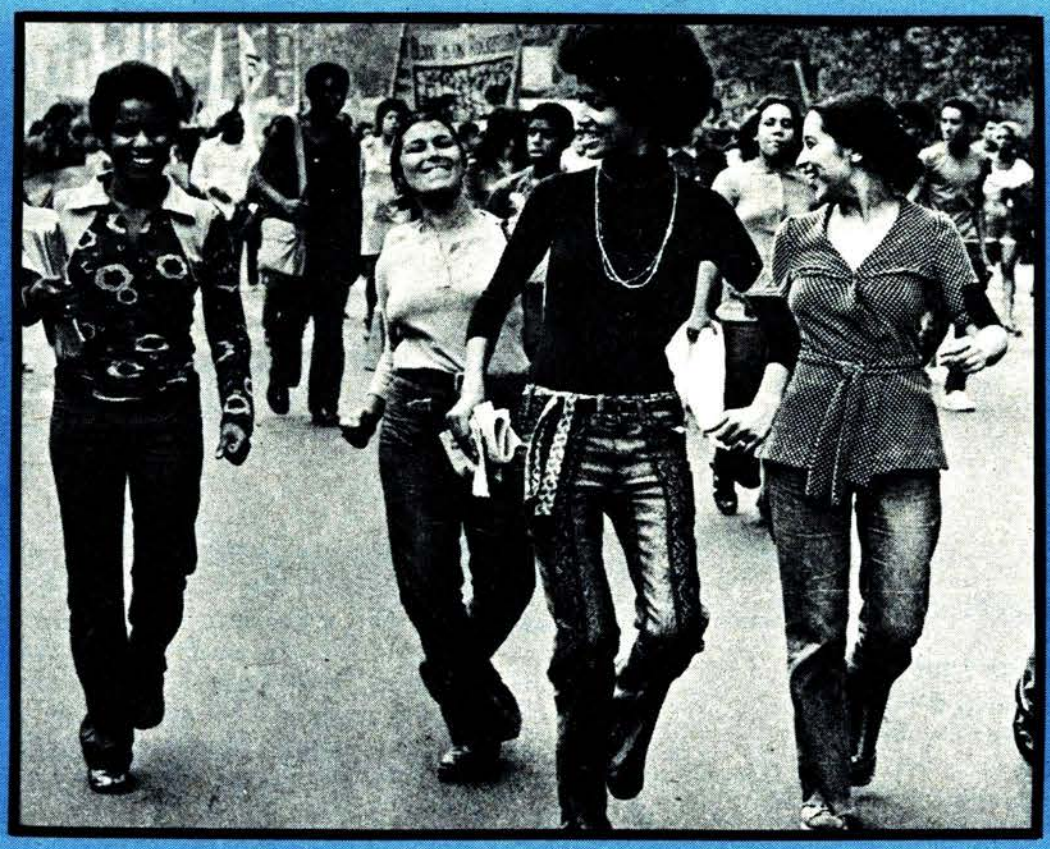
In order to bring about the liberation of women, we must first define exactly who the enemy of women is in this country. The enemy is not men; the enemy is imperialism. It is the corporate owners and the politicians who work for them that are keeping women in a subordinate position -- both in the home and on the job. It is the same enemy that the people of Indochina have been fighting -- those few rulers who tell us what our wages are to be, what our history books will print, what jobs we are "qualified" to hold, and how we are to treat our brothers and sisters.

It is imperialism which has divided men and women against themselves and it is high time that this division cease. If we are to learn from the people of the world who are opposing U. S. imperialism and carry on the struggle to defeat this enemy from within, we must do it in unity. "Women's liberation" is a worthy slogan for the struggle that is ahead of us. If women are to be liberated from domestic and wage slavery and free to participate in productive labor, it will be the task of women to fight for economic and social equality (not only formal equality). The liberation of women will be a major part of the liberation of society as a whole because when women are finally free to equally participate in the running of their society, U. S. imperialism will be destroyed.

International Women's Day is a tribute to working and struggling women everywhere. It is a holiday which signals the uniting of women, both with their sisters and their brothers; it is a signal that women are dedicating themselves to struggling for their own liberation and the liberation of society as a whole; and it is a signal that now is the time to gather our strength and courage, just as our ancestors did, and move onward to bring about and claim our victories. International Women's Day is a sign of the rising of the women -- women who are willing to meet their responsibilities and carry the struggle against imperialism forward.

The spirit of International Women's Day is well expressed by a voice from our past in the following poem inspired by striking women textile workers in the early 1900's:

As we come marching, marching, we bring the
greater days;
The rising of the women means the rising of us all.
No more the drudge and idler, Ten that toil where
one reposes,
But a sharing of life's glories, Bread and Roses,
Bread and Roses.



Vietnam Veterans Against the War
Winter Soldier Organization

Objectives

1. To demand an immediate cessation of fighting and the withdrawal of all American troops, planes, and military and economic aid from Southeast Asia. We cannot allow one more human being to be killed in Southeast Asia. We support as a basis for the cessation of these hostilities the various peace proposals of the People of Southeast Asia or such future plans as they develop based upon their right of self-determination and actual control of their own destinies.

2. To demand the immediate termination of all other operations by the United States Government, its agencies, and American business interests that are designed to suppress the rightful struggles for liberation and self-determination of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America. This includes the maintenance of dictatorial governments, economic domination, and the theft of the natural resources of other countries. The United States should make reparations in a program acceptable to the Indochinese for all of the damage done by the United States.

3. To demand that all active-duty servicemen and women, reservists and national guardsmen be afforded the same rights that are guaranteed by the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights that are presently denied by the Uniform Code of Military Justice. We are appalled that our active-duty GIs are treated as less than first class citizens. We endorse the efforts of our active-duty sisters and brothers in their struggle to democratize the military.

4. To support all military personnel refusing to serve against their consciences in wars at home and abroad. We demand that Congress enact legislation for the immediate repatriation of those brothers and sisters who are in prison or in self-exile by reason of their refusal to serve in the military. It must also involve an end to all repression and a freeing of all political prisoners.

5. To demand there be no distinctions as to types of discharges and that a single type of discharge be issued, and that this be retroactive. We also demand all veterans receive all rights and benefits under the VA; and that compensation for disabilities be based solely upon the degree of disability for veterans and their families, without regard to sex, race, rank or length of service.

6. To make clear that the United States has never undertaken an extensive, open investigation of American war crimes in Indochina. In its war in Indochina, the principles of Nuremberg have been violated. As active-duty and former GIs, we recognize the responsibility and guilt of the individual soldier to refrain from committing war crimes. We also recognize that the responsibility and guilt of war crimes committed in the name of America lies with our policy makers at all levels.

7. Resolved to fight racism, to show Americans that our society is permeated by racism, which manipulates whites into viewing non-whites as inferior or less than human. This racism pushes Third World People through inferior schools to inferior jobs and into combat arms. Thus Third World People are sent off to die in disproportionately high numbers as we kill Asians indiscriminately. We also demand the US military recognize its complicity in America's domestic and international racism.

8. Resolved to fight sexism, to show that sexism plays a major part in promoting war. We must show Americans our society is permeated by sexism, which forces an inferior status upon women, reducing them to subservient sexual objects, and which robs both men and women of their natural growth. This institutionalized sexism channels women into unfulfilling, lower paying jobs which are servile in nature and purpose; it exploits their bodies for sex and profit; and it degrades and dehumanizes them by a double standard of morality wholly dependent on the myth of male supremacy. This sexism is exploited by the military, officially defining servicewomen as subordinate and thoroughly subjugating them to servile work and the role of a sexual object. We resolve to fight sexism within our society, within our own organization and within ourselves.

9. To support the democratic right of Americans to unionize and strike to protect their income and safeguard their employment. We consider all legislation designed to suppress these rights, including mandatory arbitration, to be illegal and not in the interests of the American working people. We also demand full employment for all Americans, including free educational and vocational training for all who need or want it. We refuse to participate in the efforts being made to separate us from other working people, making veterans enemies by giving us the charade of employment priority. We condemn this as a method of encouraging enlistment by the false promise of employment after service. We also condemn the use of active-duty GIs, Reservists and National Guardsmen as strikebreakers.

10. To dedicate ourselves to these principles and objectives which directly relate to the imperialist suppression of the People of the World by the United States government. We understand this war is imperialist in origin and affirm that the membership of VVAW/WSO is not only concerned with ending this war, but with changing the domestic, social, political and economic institutions that have caused and perpetuated its continuance.

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

Winter Soldier Organization

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LSU-NO Lake Front
New Orleans, Louisiana 70122
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National Office
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Chicago, Illinois 60657
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Project Offices

Gary Lawton Defense Comm.
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Riverside, California 92502

Operation County Fair
Linda Regnier
Route 1, Box 109
Browns, Alabama 36724

Amnesty Clearinghouse
See National Office

Post Vietnam Syndrome Clearinghouse
See Wisconsin-Minnesota

N.O.S.C.A.M. (National GI Office)
PO Box 1625
Dayton, Ohio 45401
(513) 274-3171

WHAT IS VVAW-WSO

Vietnam Veterans Against the War began in 1967 in New York City when six anti-war veterans marched in a demonstration under the banner "Vietnam Veterans Against the War." This first public action was followed by many more in the years to come.

Operation Rapid American Withdrawal (RAW) was a forced march by 150 vets from Trenton, N.J. to Valley Forge. This march, in the fall of 1970, was one of the earliest national VVAW actions. Along the march route vets conducted mock "search and destroy" missions, interrogation of prisoners, and other lessons well learned in Vietnam. During Operation RAW the original objectives of VVAW were formulated.

The trial of Lt. Calley was a major force behind convening the Winter Soldier Investigation into American War Crimes committed in Southeast Asia. This investigation, held in Detroit in January 1971, saw over 150 veterans testifying about war crimes they had committed. The message to the American people was clear: My Lai was not an aberration but the calculated result of American imperialistic policy in Vietnam. Several congressional inquiries, a book, and 3 documentary movies came out of the WSI.

With the spring of 1971 came Dewey Canyon III, a limited incursion into the halls of Congress. Dewey Canyon I and II had taken place in Southeast Asia without the knowledge or consent of the American people; VVAW was now determined to be heard. For a week, members of VVAW lobbied with Congressmen, testified in hearings, performed guerilla theater, and engaged the people of Washington, D.C. in a continuing dialogue. On Friday, 1100 vets returned the medals they had been awarded by the government for military service. This was the final break, and the return of the medals signified the ultimate act of revulsion for what these medals stood for.

The summer of 1971 saw a general lull in anti-war activity the country over. VVAW began to move in a new direction into our communities. We began the process of learning that the war was only a symptom, that as long as the American economic structure could profit from the exploitation of working and third people at home and around the world, wars like Vietnam would continue. During all of this, however, we did not forget about the war. Christmas, 1971, found 16 members of VVAW holding the Statue of Liberty captive. The war was again front page news.

VVAW took part in actions at both the Democratic and Republican conventions. Our demonstrations there were both legal and peaceful. We went to Miami Beach with the people's most dangerous weapon, the truth -- and to prevent the people from hearing that truth, the government had to use spies, infiltrators, and agents to provoke violence.

When Coronation (Inauguration) Day 1973 arrived, VVAW again returned to Washington. Over 5,000 people strong, we marched, signed the 9-point peace agreement with the Vietnamese people, and returned to our communities.

The signing of the peace treaty by our government has left us with no illusions about the future. We were the sailors in the Gulf of Tonkin in 1964, and there are brothers and sisters in the military today who may well be participants in a future Gulf of Tonkin incident. We have learned that only a radical change in the system of this country can possibly prevent the wars of the future.

As we learned what was behind the Vietnam War, and as we went into our communities to work, we found people who agreed with our objectives but who were not veterans (though all Americans are in fact Vietnam veterans). To broaden our base of membership, we added "Winter Soldier Organization" to our name to become the present Vietnam Veterans Against the War/Winter Soldier Organization.

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER

There is one basic requirement for membership in VVAW/WSO: agreement with the ten objectives and a willingness to work toward their implementation. To join, contact the national office or your regional address as listed above.

VVAW-WSO
827 W Newport.
Chicago, Illinois 60657
tel.(312)935-2129

_____ I would like to Join VVAW/WSO

_____ I am an active-duty GI

_____ I am currently in prison

_____ I am enclosing $____ to support your group

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

VVAW-WSO

PROTESTS CONTINUE!

Photo: Hank Dudley

VVAW/WSO button placed on photo of Thieu during take-over in Wash.

On the anniversary of the signing of the Peace Agreement on Ending the War in Vietnam, it was evident that these agreements were being violated by the United States and the Thieu government in Saigon. This fact prompted VVAW/WSO to organize and participate in demonstrations across the country to heighten the public awareness around this and other major issues of the day. In addition to demanding an end to US involvement in Indochina, VVAW/WSO also demanded that Nixon be kicked out of office for criminal acts against the American people and the people of the world, and for universal and unconditional amnesty for all war resisters. These demonstrations united around these three demands drew the support of many other organizations, in what is becoming a united effort to expose the administration in Washington DC and the businessmen who control it.

The demonstrations were kicked off in Washington DC, on Friday, January 25, when six members of VVAW/WSO and one reporter entered the Saigon Information Office's Psy/War Ministry and asked the occupants to leave. Eventually all of the employees left and the VVAW/WSO members draped banners out of the window reading, 'Implement the Peace Accords' and another reading, 'VVAW/WSO'. After one hour of occupation, the police broke into the building and arrested the demonstrators who had intended to stay there until the US recognized its duty to implement the peace accords. Just prior to the police break-in, the vets called the Provisional Revolutionary Government's Paris office to express their solidarity with the Vietnamese people.

The six members were taken to jail and were finally charged with interference with a diplomatic mission. They will be tried in the US Superior Court on March 6th and the veterans will challenge the legality of the Saigon government as their defense.

On Saturday, January 26th, the organization initiated and participated in demonstrations, rallies and vigils across the country. In Chicago, Illinois, the VVAW/WSO chapter initiated a march and rally that drew 400 people. The march proceeded down the main street of Chicago, State Street, and wound up at the Civic Center for a rally where demonstrators listened to speakers from the Revolutionary Union, the Puerto Rican Socialist Party and VVAW/WSO member, John Young, former POW. The spirited demonstrators marched through pouring rain and were greeted and encouraged by many of the shoppers along the way. This demonstration drew the support of the many organizations in Chicago that support these demands. Some of these groups include: CAGLA, the October League, RU, PSP, the New World Resource Center, the National Lawyers Guild, the Cultural Workers Committee, Bread and Roses, and the Throw the Bum Out Coalition.

In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the chapter organized a march through their neighborhood and drew 200 community people out into the rain to demand implementation of the agreements, universal and unconditional amnesty for all war resisters, and Kick Nixon Out! After the march and rally, about 75 community people and VVAW/WSO members got together informally and discussed the reasons why these demands are necessary for all the American people.

A two day fast and a nighttime vigil were sponsored by the Denver, Colorado Springs and Boulder chapters. These events were held on the steps of the Capitol Building in Denver. About 25 people fasted for the two day period, and the vigil attracted over 125. The fast was marked by enthusiastic support from the people of that city who were in agreement with the three demands.

The California chapters participa-

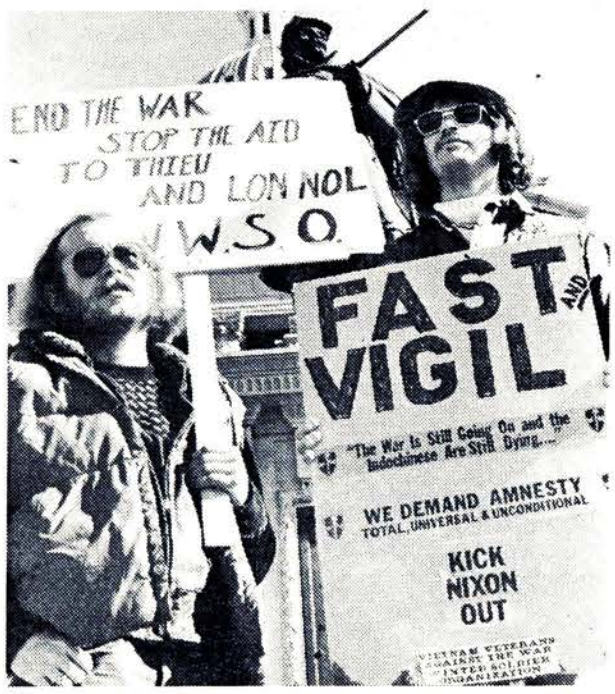

Photo: Jerry Johnson

Denver - 125 people at fast and vigil

Photo: Winter Soldier

Chicago - 400 people marching down State Street prior to rally at Civic Center

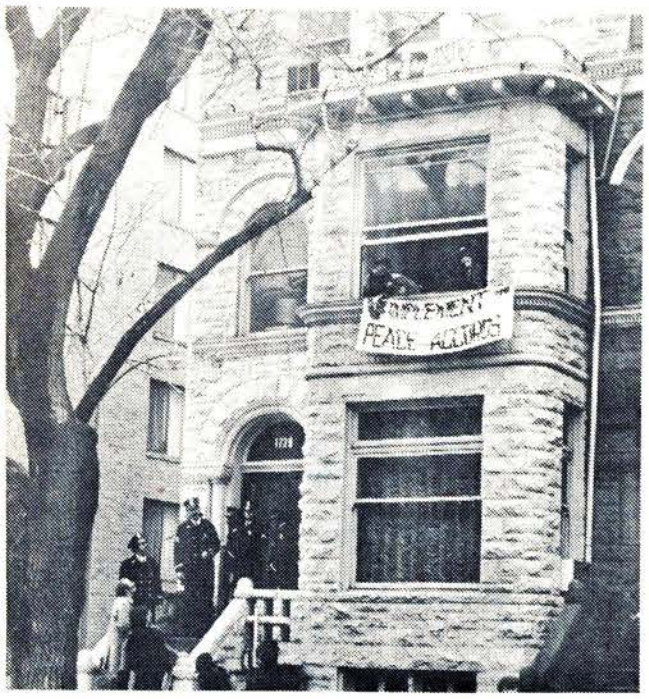

Photo: Jim Klimanski

VVAW/WSO argues with police over occupation of Saigon Info. Office

ted in cultural and political events sponsored by the Indochina Solidarity Committee and the Bay Area Coalition to Free Political Prisoners in South Vietnam. This educational held in Oakland preceeded a night of music and speakers that attracted over 600 people who listened to, among others, Bob McBrity of VVAW/WSO who spoke for the need for amnesty for all war resisters.

Other demonstrations and leafletting took place in chapters across the country including: Miami, Florida; Columbus, Ohio; Kansas City, Missouri; and Buffalo, Rochester and New York City, New York.

As the growing unrest of the people builds and as more and more people take to the streets to demonstrate their concern over the ever-increasing crimes of the American government, these marches and rallies will continue to draw the unqualified support of the majority of the American people.

BUILD VVAW-WSO

UNITY-STRUGGLE-VICTORY

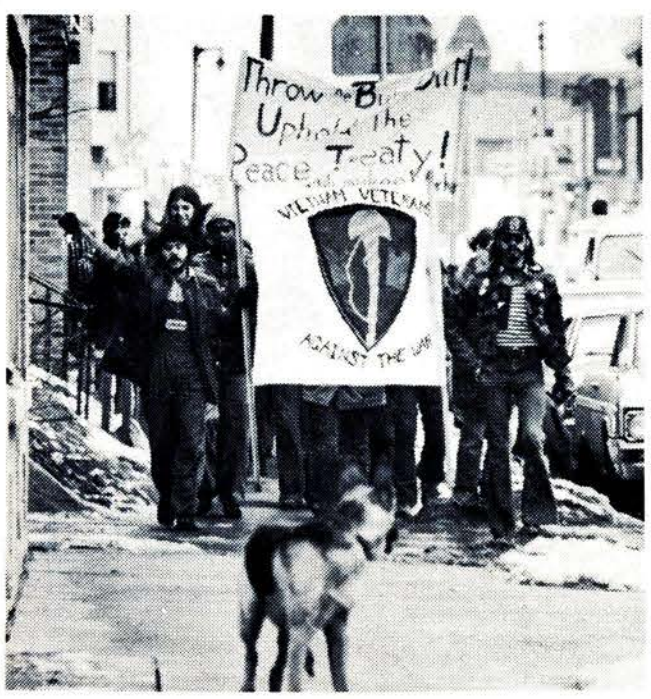

Photo: Paul Ruez

Milwaukee - 200 people at march and rally

NATIONAL OFFICE COMMENT:

TERRORISM

In recent weeks we have been bombarded with media reports of the alleged activities of the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA). The SLA is purportedly responsible for the Nov. 6th slaying of Oakland School Superintendent, Dr. Marcus Foster, and the Feb. 4th kidnapping of Patricia Hearst, daughter of newspaper magnate Randolph Hearst. Whoever is responsible for these acts has set in motion a very unfortunate series of events that cannot but have adverse effects on progressive forces in the US and N. Calif. in particular.

Dr. Foster's murder was certainly no way in which to raise any issues around the Oakland school system. It only served to obscure any legitimate demands for change that were being made. Similarly, Ms. Hearst can in no way be held responsible for the polical role played by her father in the US. Her kidnapping and the slaying of Dr. Foster were irresponsible acts of terrorism conducted by a few individuals. VVAW/WSO condemns them.

Additionaly, these events have provided police officials and right-wing media sources a golden opportunity to attack movement organizations in the Bay area. Oakland police and media personnel have already tried unsuccessfully to link VVAW/WSO with the Foster slaying, hoping to thereby discredit our work. An Oakland PD spokesman went so far as to say that they had "reason to believe that VVAW could be involved" in the slaying. Statements such as this are totally unfounded either in political or evidenciary fact. But, as we have learned from the Lawton/Gardner trials, police officials are more than willing to frame movement activists when the real suspects cannot be located.

VVAW/WSO firmly believes that it is the American people themselves that will make significant social change in this country. In the long struggle we are facing to end oppression here, it is only the American people who will be able to achieve their own liberation from it. We must never lose sight of the fact that the people are the real heroes in this process, not individuals isolated from them.

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827 W. NEWPORT, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60657

THE WAR COMES HOME

DON KEMP

After deliberating less than an hour on January 18th, a Waukesha County jury found Donald Kemp, a 26-year old Vietnam veteran, sane when he shot and killed his wife Diane in June of 1971. In pronouncing him sane they upheld his conviction of first-degree, premeditated murder and his sentence of life imprisonment.

In Vietnam, Don's job was to fire on the ARVN, the NLF, the North Vietnamese or the U. S. units who had called their own truce in a given area. If an American unit refused to make contact by going the other way, it was Don's responsibility to fire on them and give their position away to the 'enemy'. If the villagers in an area became too 'secure', it was Don's job to kill some village officials to bring some heat on the NLF from the village people.

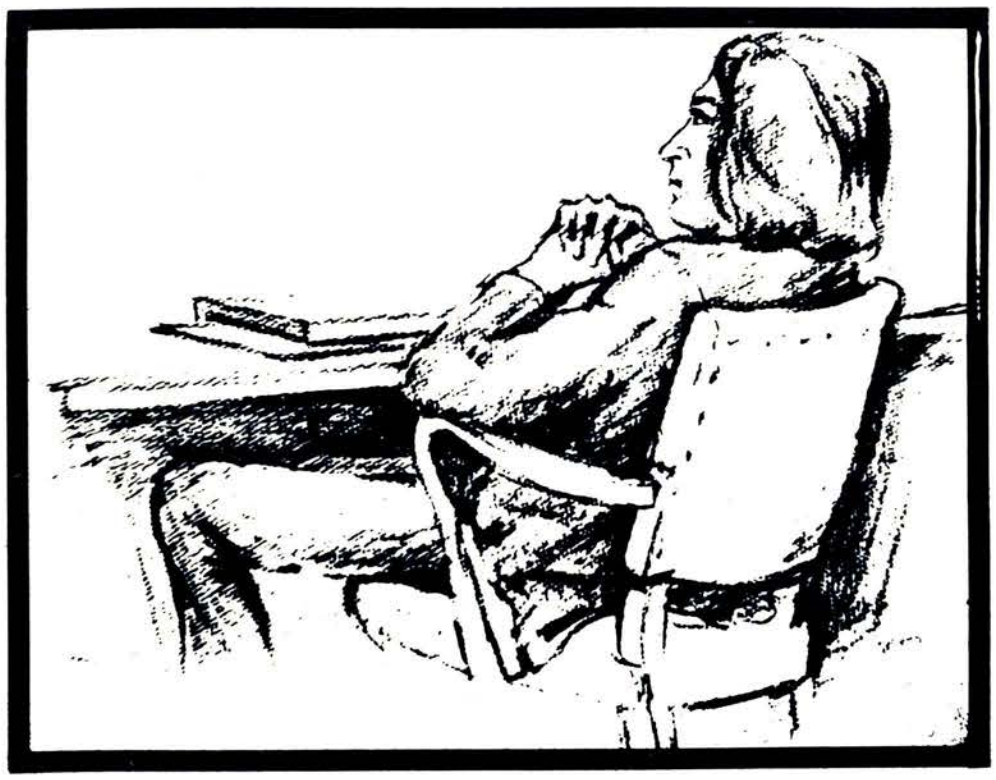
After Don came home he began having nightmares. He was paranoid about the safety of his family and insisted that they put chain locks on all the doors. He started drinking and taking downers to get rid of his nightmares - flashbacks from Vietnam.

He was admitted three separate times to the VA Hospital and was an inpatient for a total of 23 weeks where he was doped up on librium, stelazine and thorazine - the last two, heavy tranquilizers often given to people diagnosed as psychotic. They discharged him as an inpatient on May 5, 1971, and as an outpatient on June 10th because the psychiatrist he had been seeing was leaving the VA and because Don had showed some improvement. That night, while having a flashback/nightmare, he was awakened by his wife whom he then shot thinking that she was 'the enemy'. He shot her with a .22 caliber pistol which he kept under his pillow.

Don can't remember anything about the next five days. June 15th he turned himself in at the VA Hospital, carrying a bottle of rum, the loaded gun and with his kids - ages 3 and 5 - in hand.

On July 7, 1972, Don Kemp was pronounced sane and automatically convicted of first-degree, premeditated murder; he then began serving his life sentence.

While in jail, Don formed a group among other Vietnam vets to deal with the problem of PVS (Post-Vietnam Syndrome or Post-Vietnam Struggle). He also worked on his appeal.



Drawing by Sam Bataro

DON KEMP AT TRIAL

On November 12, his appeal came through. And after refusing all offers of a 'bargain' from the State, the new trial began on January 14th in Waukesha, Wisconsin. Through the use of challenges, DA Richard McConnell eliminated everyone on the jury panel who had themselves served, or had any close relative serve, in Vietnam. He even eliminated all veterans of any war except for one man who was a bomber pilot in WW II. He also challenged all young people - the average age of the jurors was 55.

Judge Clair Voss ruled that the phrase "Post-Vietnam Syndrome" could not be mentioned in court. The five witnesses who testified were all psychiatrists. Three said he was not responsible for his acts at the time of the crime, one said no one could make that decision, and one had no opinion.

In his summation, McConnell called combat neurosis "hogwash and a smokescreen... Mr. Kemp is a fraud, a drunk and a drug addict." Referring to the 30-35 VVAW/WSO people who were coming to court every day to support Don, McConnell said, "These people are here to fool you."

And so Donald Kemp is back in Waupun Prison, sentenced to stay there for the rest of his natural life. He's working on his appeal and has a $3 million law suit against the Veterans Administration Hospital for the murder of his wife.

The VA suit begins to sharpen the focus of the problem because the VA does not recognize PVS as a service-connected disability. The reason it cannot recognize PVS is because the government would then have to admit to what actually happened in Vietnam; and this is the issue we're confronted with.

Throughout the trial the role of the War in Don's actions was not explored. But even as the Waukesha DA admitted, there are psychological casualties in any war, which in itself should command leniency in cases such as this. But the Vietnam experience compounded the problems produced by war. The routine murder of defenseless people, torture, defoliation, free fire zones, terror bombing, mass relocations, napalm and white phosphorous and the overwhelming firepower were particular to Vietnam. What was more particular was that our soldiers were fighting for a lie. The brutality of other wars could usually be rationalized by participants because there was some meaning, such as fighting the spread of facism. Not so with Vietnam; we were not fighting for democracy - we were defending a dictator.

And so with the case of Don Kemp the people who govern us have again shown their inhumanity. They refuse to admit what effect the War actually had on Vietnam veterans like Don and that the problems created by the War did not magically disappear with the signing of the Peace Agreement. There are thousands of other vets like Don who may be on drugs, in prison, leading dead-end lives - waiting for America to wake up. A victory for Don will be a victory for us all.

SLAVE'S RIGHT TO REBEL

FREE RUCHELL MAGEE

Ruchell being shackled in court.

A man is now sitting in the San Jose County Jail who has spent the majority of his life struggling for freedom. That man is Ruchell Magee -- a black political prisoner for nearly 20 years who has for all practical purposes been forgotten by the people of this country. Ruchell's fight against the racism of our society began when he was 16 years old and living in his home state of Louisiana. In 1955, he was found guilty of "attempted aggravated rape" of a white woman by an all-white jury. Though the woman who had been raped failed to identify Ruchell in a police line-up, he was sentenced to 12 years in the Angola State Penitentiary.

After six years in prison, Ruchell was paroled and moved to Los Angeles in 1962. Within seven months after his parole, Magee was again caught up in the racism of our court system. This time, he was charged with a kidnapping which supposedly arose out of an argument over $10. Based on the coerced confession of the alleged "victim," (a confession which was illegally admitted in court) Ruchell was again convicted of a charge he was innocent of, and sentenced to one year to life in prison. Magee was sent to San Quentin where he fought for and won the right to a new trial in 1965, on the grounds that testimony had been illegally presented at his first trial. Ruchell's court-appointed attorney entered a plea of "innocent by reason of insanity." When Magee objected to this plea, he was gagged, dragged from the courtroom and beaten by guards. The judge in this second trial (who just happened to also preside over the first trial) ordered the jury to either find Ruchell insane or guilty of the kidnapping. He was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Ruchell returned to San Quentin and immediately began filing briefs and appeals to the courts -- petitioning for his freedom. His belief in the justice of this country was shattered in Feb., 1970, when a young black prisoner was murdered by San Quentin guards. Ruchell pledged (along with many other prisoners) that the truth of this murder would be taken to the outside world, and the prison responded by unleashing a reign of terror against all prisoners who had been involved in speaking out against repression in the prison.

Following years of fruitless struggle for a fair hearing, following years of brutality and an overwhelming desire for justice and freedom, Ruchell appeared in the Marin County courthouse on August 7, 1970, to testify on behalf of a fellow prisoner. On this day, Ruchell rebelled against his oppression in what has come to be called the "Courthouse Slave Rebellion." On this day in court, Jonathan Jackson rose from his seat and said: "All right gentlemen, this is it." The prisoners then made their bid for freedom and attempted to escape in a van, taking with them the court's presiding judge. Marin County Sheriffs opened fire on the van and indiscriminately murdered Jonathan Jackson, William Christmas, James McClain, and Judge Harold Haley. Following the murder, Ruchell (the only surviving prisoner) was charged with murder, conspiracy to free the alleged Soledad Brothers, and kidnapping. These charges came to trial in 1972 and during the trial, it was discovered that the bullet which killed Judge Haley was traced to a weapon of one of the guards. With Ruchell's involvement in the murder having been disproved, the jury deliberated and returned hopelessly hung.

The murder charge against Ruchell was then dropped and he is still awaiting his second trial on kidnapping charges resulting from the Slave Rebellion. Since the first trial, Ruchell has been practically abandoned by his supporters. Following are some excerpts from a letter which Ruchell recently sent to Gary Lawton and the Riverside Political Prisoners Defense Committee.

"I am in need of sincere support to get my message to the people. Sincere defense committee support is the only way the injustice will be exposed or stopped. The past committee support I have been getting can be described only as an extension of my oppression... I don't know what you have read or heard in the news media, but the state agents do not want to let this slave case go to trial again. They have no case. Period. I haven't committed any crime; but any black man (victim of Police frame-ups) can be caught by the judicial traps of slave oppression. It is no crime to break out of the traps of slave oppression!"

"The California defense committees and supporters haven't shown me anything -- except foolishness and exploitation. Progressive people must strive to improve (build) our society. That is why I am appealing to the people for support. I can prove (easily prove) in facts, law and evidence that the court-appointed lawyer in 1965, all-out railroaded me, by tricking the jury into finding me guilty. This was done through the use of the lawyers' vicious false insanity/guilty plea. All that is needed to prove this "undisputable fact" is my being allowed the right to be heard in court, in that I may produce the factual evidence."

Ruchell Magee remains strong and determined to gain his freedom and he has continually maintained his complete innocence in all of the charges he has been imprisoned for. Ruchell is just one of the many victims of the racism exhibited by our court system and our society as a whole. At this time, unless support from the people of this country is given to Ruchell, he will be destined to spend the remainder of his life behind prison walls. Ruchell's political history and it's culmination in the Courthouse Slave Rebellion should be an example to all of us who are involved in the struggle for freedom and equality.

"I'm not guilty but I'm laying my life on the line to prove this fact."

FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!

the rising of women is the rising of the people

MARCH 8 · INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

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